

Symbolic Status of Architectural Identity: Example of Famagusta Walled City

Authors : Rafooneh Mokhtarshahi Sani

Abstract : This study explores how the residents of a conserved urban area have used goods and ideas as resources to maintain an enviable architectural identity. Whereas conserved urban quarters are seen as role model for maintaining architectural identity, the article describes how their residents try to give a contemporary modern image to their homes. It is argued that despite the efforts of authorities and decision makers to keep and preserve the traditional architectural identity in conserved urban areas, people have already moved on and have adjusted their homes with their preferred architectural taste. Being through such conflict of interests, have put the future of architectural identity in such places at risk. The thesis is that, on the one hand, such struggle over a desirable symbolic status in identity formation is taking place, and, on the other, it is continuously widening the gap between the real and ideal identity in the built environment. The study then analytically connects the concept of symbolic status to current identity debates. As an empirical research, this study uses systematic social and physical observation methods to describe and categorize the characteristics of settlements in Walled City of Famagusta, which symbolically represent the modern houses. The Walled City is a cultural heritage site, which most of its urban context has been conserved. Traditional houses in this area demonstrate the identity of North Cyprus architecture. The conserved residential buildings, however, either has been abandoned or went through changes by their users to present the ideal image of contemporary life. In the concluding section, the article discusses the differences between the symbolic status of people and authorities in defining a culturally valuable contemporary home. And raises the question of whether we can talk at all about architectural identity in terms of conserving the traditional style, and how we may do so on the basis of dynamic nature of identity and the necessity of its acceptance by the users.

Keywords : symbolic status, architectural identity, conservation, facades, Famagusta walled city

Conference Title : ICSSCVC 2017 : International Conference on Semiotics, Social, Cultural and Visual Communication

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : August 28-29, 2017